

A Meeting of the Parish Council was held on Monday the 12th day of FEBRUARY 2024 at the Royal British Legion, Long Lane – commencing 7.35 pm

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Messrs Cole, Lambert (Vice-Chair), Rayner (Chair) and Storey, Mrs Arnold, Mrs Edwards, Mrs McGeeney, Mrs Peacock, Mrs Peckham and Mrs Wilson. Also present 6 members of the public.

APOLOGIES: Apologies were received from Mr Fenn and RAF Commander Geary.

The Chair asked if anyone was recording the meeting and Mr Cole replied that he was. All present consented to being recorded.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: Mrs Wilson declared an interest in Item 25.

MINUTES: Minutes of the last Parish Council meeting were approved. Mrs Wilson proposed, Mr Cole seconded, 8 in favour, Mrs Edwards abstained having not been in office.

PUBLIC SPEAKING: The meeting was suspended for 8 minutes for Public Speaking.

MATTERS ARISING

1. **RAF Feltwell** – The RAF Commander was not present but had forwarded his January report to the Clerk. In order to retain currency and competency on the aircraft, sorties had undertaken some night flying this month. 48FW aircraft participated in exercises in Italy and Portugal and the Station also hosted a HQ USAFE Agile Combat Employment Conference. Planning has started for the 2024 Suffolk and Norfolk Shows. The British American Committee are meeting at RAF Mildenhall this week. 48FW will be conducting an Active Shooter Table-Top Exercise which will include input from the local Emergency Services in the latter part of the month and will also be celebrating their successes and recognising their best people at the Annual Awards Ceremony later this week.

2. **Risk Assessment** – **Weekly:** No issues had arisen from weekly inspections other than a missing end cap from guttering around the Changing Rooms which the Handyman will replace. Mrs Peckham said the self-closing gates close far too quickly and need attention. Clerk said the tennis court resurfacing work carried out September 2021 had had a two-year warranty. Weed killing options to be discussed next meeting. **Quarterly Inspection:** Clerk, Mr Cole and Mr Lambert met Online Playgrounds to look at resurfacing work highlighted in the annual and quarterly inspection reports and Clerk had circulated their quotation, valid for 60 days. Mr Lambert said the Playing Field Group should decide which areas need resurfacing but Mrs Peckham felt it should be a Council decision since the Council had asked the Clerk to obtain prices for this work during the November walkabout. Mr Lambert said another site meeting would need to take place. Mrs Wilson felt any resurfacing work should be done before the summer holidays therefore Mr Lambert suggested scheduling a meeting for late March. Clerk to obtain another quotation for the next meeting and schedule an onsite meeting with all Councillors for late March. **Gates:** Mr Fenn and Mr Lambert had removed shrubbery from outside the entrance and will now scrape back the remaining mud so the area underneath can be assessed. **Playing Field Group:** Mrs Edwards said she would like to join the Group, all in favour.

3. **Balance Sheet** – No queries.

4. **Allotment Pest Control** – Report not yet received for February. Mr Storey asked if number of vermin trapped or poisoned could be obtained from the contractor. Clerk to contact Mr Rolph. Mr Storey then thanked the Clerk, Mr Fenn and Mr Lambert for their efforts with new tenants and for measuring the new farm plot.

5. **NALC** – Newsletters circulated. Clerk said paperwork for gov.uk domain had been submitted.

MATTERS ARISING (CONT)

6. Cllr Martin Storey Report – Mr Storey said the NCC Budget meeting on 20/2/24 was open to the public and could also be watched on YouTube. All consultation responses would be considered although he was against any cuts to Adult Social Care. The Borough Council's Budget Meeting takes place 22/2/24. Mr Storey mentioned a few news items and said the QE Hospital is still on track for completion 2030. NCC Leader, Kay Mason Billig met with MPs on 31/1/24 (the 71st anniversary of the 1953 North Sea Flood) to explain the flood risks Norfolk faces and how they could be addressed. Further information can be found on NCC and Borough Council websites.

Other matters: Although some white-lining had been carried out, the roundels had not yet been painted. Mr Storey said there was still a fortnight in the timescale for this work but he would be following it up if not done. Chair said the 'No Entry' wording at The Beck junction with Lodge Road/Oak Street had been removed and needed to be repainted. Mr Storey said he understood residents' concerns re flooding at Old Methwold Road and that a better job should have been done. As this work had been funded by taxpayers' money, he would raise the matter again. Chair said drains blocked with mud and silt did not help the matter and water was also sitting in unrepaired potholes. Mrs Peckham asked who paid the consultants employed by the Borough Council to answer questions and conduct reports pertaining to planning applications 22/00860/FM and 22/00866/FM as she did not think it fair for taxpayers to fund it or any further consultations that may be required. Mr Storey agreed and said he would find out.

7. Playing Field Boundary Wall – Clerk said she, Mr Cole and Mr Lambert had met Fenland Fencing on site and Fenland Fencing had recommended V-Mesh fencing as it was more aesthetically-pleasing, hard-wearing and harder to climb than chain-link. She had therefore obtained prices for both chain-link and V-Mesh fencing from True Hill Fencing, Fenland Fencing and Chase Timber Products. It was agreed that V-Mesh sounded more suitable therefore Mrs Wilson proposed accepting Chase Timber Products quotation at £3702.39 + VAT as it was the most cost-effective, Mrs Peacock seconded, all in favour. Clerk to organise.

8. Highways – Clerk said the owner of 2 Oak Street had received a letter from NCC on 17/1/24 and that a local contractor was cutting the hedge down to 7ft and back to the pavement edge today. He had informed NCC of this work but said the pavement would still not be wide enough to accommodate prams, mobility scooters etc so would be willing to work with Highways further on this matter. Mr Storey said Andrew Wallace was aware of the owner's actions and had instructed Dan Jordan to view the path last Friday. Mr Jordan said the pavement was not wide enough therefore Highways would side out the pavement when the hedge had been cut and assess its width again. Mrs Peckham said had BCKLWN Planning permitted the owner's application to replace the entire hedge with a 7ft fence then this would not be an issue and although aware of planning laws forbidding such a fence on a boundary next to a highway, she asked Mr Storey if Planning would permit a 6ft fence installed further back from the boundary with a picket fence on the boundary line. Mr Storey did not know the answer. Clerk said 'Paynes Lane' sign near the Social Club was in situ.

9. Overhanging Greenery – Mr Storey said he remembered the agreement being made between Highways and the owners of 50 Wilton Road and would pay them a visit to push this matter along. Hedge at 19 Wilton Road had been cut.

10. Grass Maintenance Contract Quotations – Clerk read out the four quotations received. Mr Lambert felt R H Landscapes & Maintenance had been tried and tested, and therefore proposed accepting their quotation of £6240 + VAT, Mr Cole seconded, all in favour. Clerk to organise.

11. Rangers – Clerk said residents of 9 Hill Street and 18 Hill Street, and proprietor of the Londis, had tidied up the front of their properties and the Churchwarden had this in hand. Residents of 1a Hill Street and 41 High Street had not undertaken any clearance therefore it was agreed that another letter should be sent. Clerk to write to residents of 1a Hill Street and 41 High Street. Chair will speak to proprietors of The Fish Piper.

MATTERS ARISING (CONT)

12. Audit – Approve Accounts (Email Address) – See Item 5.

13. To Consider Residents’ Concerns Regarding Hill Street Junction with St Mary’s Street/The Beck and Speeding Along The Beck – Hill St Junction with St Mary’s St: Mr Storey said there were still two weeks left in February for the ‘Give Way Ahead’ sign to be installed. **The Beck:** Chair said the SAM2 post should be installed soon.

14. To Consider Resident’s Enquiry re SAM2 Data – Chair hadn’t received the data so would have to circulate it to Councillors.

15. Iron Bridge & Track – Anchor Ward – Clerk circulated Liz Truss’s response which stated no further correspondence had been received from either party. Ms Truss had therefore written to NCC to raise the resident’s concerns and seek clarification on whether they were planning to maintain the highway by adopting it given the application under s.53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 that was brought to her attention by the South Yorkshire Pension Authority (SYPA). The resident had then forwarded the Clerk an email from Ms Truss, dated 22/1/24, relaying NCC’s response to this, clarifying that it owned *“the footbridge extension over Iron Bridge Track which was collaboratively funded by the Education & Highways Department in the mid-1970’s to facilitate a route for school children commuting from the Norfolk side of the river to schools in Cambridgeshire. However, the sections of the route carried by the road or footway have never been deemed maintainable by Highways and consequently any maintenance conducted by Highways had been on a non-prejudice basis. It is essential to note that the footbridge/footway section is entirely dependent on the road bridge for support. Regarding the main structure, any maintenance conducted by NCC has been on a non-prejudice basis. NCC had no prescribed intention of assuming responsibility and regardless of whether the structure carries a non-maintainable public highway and/or a public footpath, their stance is that the maintenance responsibility for the road bridge lies with the owner, SYPA”*. Ms Truss concluded she would advise the resident of any significant developments. As the resident had heard nothing further from Ms Truss nor Mr Storey until an email asking her to contact him arrived yesterday, she was now seeking the Parish Council’s assistance again in pursuing Ms Truss for a response. Mr Storey had visited the Anchor a fortnight ago and confirmed he had emailed the resident. Mr Lambert felt the Parish Council could do no more as the bridge and road belonged to SYPA therefore it was a civil matter and Mr Storey concurred, stating it was beyond the Parish Council’s control but he would keep battling on behalf of the Anchor ward residents. It was noted that a Modification Order relating to Iron Bridge had been made by NCC on 19/1/24 for the addition of a public footpath over it.

16. Long Lane Development – Clerk said Flagship advised the tender process had taken longer than expected and start date is now late March, early April.

17. To Amend the Bank Mandate – Ongoing.

18. Spar, High Street – As the area had been tidier and the trolleys do not obstruct the pavement, it was agreed by all to monitor the situation. Clerk read out the Post Office’s response as to why the counter was not open as stipulated when the branch relocated in 2016. It stated the opening hours of 9 am to 5.30 pm Monday to Friday and 9 am to 12.30 pm on Saturday had not changed since the postmaster took over the branch. It analyses varying degrees of customer demand at a local level and whilst it appreciated that the opening hours differed from the original notification in 2015, the current opening hours of 46 hours a week were in line with the average number of customer sessions received at the branch. Mrs McGeeney was very disappointed with this response and said that the only argument for moving the branch was longer opening hours. Mr Lambert said it was now the Post Office’s policy to move branches into shops and as only two people worked in the Post Office, it probably could only operate those opening hours.

MATTERS ARISING (CONT)

19. 9 Oak Street, Collapsing Gable End – Scaffolding was erected 7/2/24. Traffic lights operating along Oak Street are causing congestion due to cars parked on the side of the road.

20. Budget & Precept 2024/25 – Clerk said K&M's price for installing an LED street light near the Almshouses was £1300 for the column plus anything up to £1600 for UKPN work. Clerk to obtain price for installing a solar street light.

21. Review of Co-option Policy – Following the appointment of Mrs Edwards, Mrs Wilson felt a precedent should now be set and all candidates should be interviewed even if there was only one applicant. Mrs Peckham agreed and proposed amending wording of the current policy replacing "reserves the right to" under (4) with "shall", Mrs Wilson seconded, all in favour. Clerk to amend Policy and update website.

22. West Norfolk, Falls Project – Clerk read email from Hockwold Parish Councillor, Paul Royal, requesting Feltwell Parish Council's involvement in the working party being setting up. Mr Storey said a presentation given at the Hockwold Parish Council meeting was very informative and would be beneficial if the Council decided to take this forward. Mrs Peckham asked if anyone wished to join the working party but as there were no takers, suggested reaching out to residents via the Parish Magazine and Facebook pages. Clerk to organise.

23. Appointment of Internal Auditor – Clerk read out quotations. Mr Lambert proposed TWR Accountants undertake the internal audit for year end 31/3/24 at £395 + VAT, Mrs McGeeney seconded, all in favour. Clerk to instruct the services of TWR Accountants for this work.

Mrs McGeeney departed the meeting at 9.15 pm.

24. Year 6 Prom "Litter Pick" Donation Request - Clerk read email from the Year 6 Prom Committee requesting a donation towards their cause in return for a village litter pick. Mr Lambert proposed donating £100, Mr Cole seconded, all in favour. Clerk to write to Year 6 Prom Committee

25. Request from Feltwell Community Group to use Playing Field and Changing Rooms for the Village Fete on Saturday 15th June 2024 – As Chair of Feltwell Community Group, Mrs Wilson asked permission to use the field and Changing Rooms for the village fete 15/6/24 and Picnic in the Park 21/7/24. Mrs Peckham proposed permitting the Group use of the field and Changing Rooms for both events, Mr Storey seconded, 8 in favour, Mrs Wilson abstained. Mrs Wilson said the Group were still deciding whether to continue the fete into the evening this year. Chair asked Mrs Wilson if she would like the Parish Council to apply for the license to avoid the grief experienced last year. Mrs Wilson said she would appreciate that but a Councillor would have to be named as a Designated Supervisor on the license. Mrs Peckham said she would be happy to do this. Chair said the license would apply to all events held at the field and a Hire Agreement would have to be drawn up and charges applied. Mr Storey proposed applying for a license, Mrs Peckham seconded, 8 in favour, Mrs Wilson abstained.

CORRESPONDENCE

26. Norfolk Police – Email - SNAP meeting – 30/1/24; Police Snapshot Newsletters

27. BCKLWN – Emails – Mayors Design Awards; Gypsy and Traveller Potential Sites Policy Consultation; VCSE Newsletter. **Press Release:** New planning rules put nature at the heart of development

28. NCC – Emails – **Traffic Orders:** Emergency temp closure of Paynes Lane from its junction with Vincent Close for 20m eastwards from 17/1 to 23/1/24 for valve repairs; Temp closure of Bell Street for kerbing and patching works, 19-21/2/24, 8am-4pm. **Other:** NCC (Feltwell & Littleport –

CORRESPONDENCE (CONT)

Iron Bridge Footbridge) Modification Order 2023; Norfolk Minerals & Waste Local Plan - Notification of Submission

29. RAF Lakenheath – Email – **Notification of operations at RAF Feltwell**: 31/1/24 – Essential Airfield Clearance Training, 120 explosions 9am-1pm. **Other**: Save the Date: Joan Mann Special Sports Day 9/5/24

30. Royal British Legion – Email – Invitation to Norfolk County Conference to accept award

31. NHS Norfolk & Waveney Health & Care Partnership – Email – Updates; Have your say on the IC's long-term plans for NHS dental services

32. East Cambs District Council – Email - Sutton Neighbourhood Plan (Replacement) - Consultation commenced

33. Rural Services Network – Email – Bulletins; Funding Digest

34. CPRE – Share your views on Norfolk's Landscapes

35. TWR Accountants – Email – February Tax Tips & Newsletter

36. Locus Services – Email – Promoting services, i.e. street cleaning, pressure washing, etc

37. Zurich – Email - Helping Feltwell Parish Council through the harsh weather

38. Gordon Ellis & Co – Email - Self-Watering Planters, Parish Noticeboards, Recycled Benches

39. Queen Elizabeth Hospital – Email – Modernising Update

40. Brochures - Parish Magazine

41. **CHEQUES/PAYMENTS** – Mrs Wilson proposed approving the payments, Mrs Arnold seconded, all in favour – Cheques to J Martin £55.45, S Sargent £133.91, D Wilkinson £77.57, Norfolk ALC £134.40, I Rayner £102.00. Direct Debits to Biffa £237.62, British Gas £104.13, Vodafone £20.34. Standing Orders to K&M Lighting £100.21, J Martin £1020.50.

42. PLANNING

There were no planning applications.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

43. Litter – Crabbes Close – Mrs Peckham said lots of litter had been exposed following the pruning of trees etc on the roadside leading to Crabbes Close. Clerk to ask Litter Picker to clear.

44. Highways – Mrs Peckham said there was lots of weeds along the alleyway from Bell Street to Oakfields Estate. Mr Lambert said the manhole before the RAF gates at Long Lane had sunk.

45. RBL Community Award – Chair displayed a Community Award won by the Parish Council for its support of the RBL. He had accepted the award whilst attending the RBL's Annual County Conference on 3/2/24. It was agreed the award should be displayed in the British Legion.

Next meeting to be held on Monday 11th March 2024 at the British Legion at 7.30 pm.
Meeting declared closed 9.35 pm.

Planning Application received after the meeting with deadline before the next meeting:-

24/00259/F - "Variation of Conditions 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9 of planning consent 23/02050/F: Alterations to raise roof of existing garage and convert part into a non-self-contained annexe at 14 Long Lane, Feltwell. 9 in favour, Mrs Wilson and Mr Storey abstained. NO OBJECTION.